

## WIDC 2009

### Director Participants



**MARY BISSELL**  
West Vancouver, BC

From her beginnings as the director of *A Bog in My Backyard*, an environmental documentary produced in association with CBC Rough Cuts, Bissell has built a strong portfolio of factual programming, bringing style and wit to her producing, directing, and on-screen hosting.

Her most recent documentary is a funny, heartfelt, and thought-provoking account of how a small, First Nations town went cold turkey and gave up sugar and junk food for a year. Described as *Supersize Me* meets *Northern Exposure*, *My Big Fat Diet* aired on CBC Newsworld in March 2008 and was recommended as a Critics Choice in *The Globe and Mail*. It recently won the prestigious Silver Chris Award at the Columbus International Film and Video Festival. Her previous documentary, *Naked*, is the most watched documentary ever to air on CBC Newsworld's *The Lens*, with over 1.5 million viewers to date.

Bissell's love of wildlife and animals inspired the 13-part series *Healing with Animals* that she created and co-produced with partner Christian Bruyere for Discovery Health Channel Canada, and which now airs around the world. This series brought Bissell many accolades including a bronze plaque from the Columbus International Film Festival and three Leo Awards for "Best Information Series," "Best Director, Information Series," and "Best Screenwriter, Information Series." She also co-produced the series *Beyond Invention* that is now airing on Discovery Science Channel in the US.

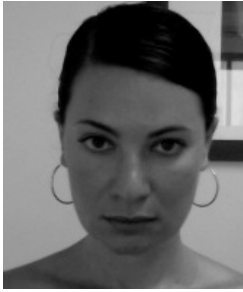
From 2003 to 2008, Bissell was co-host of Knowledge Network's *The Leading Edge*, for which she directed over fifty short documentaries and won multiple international awards. This series took her to Africa where she directed and hosted *The Gambia: Communities in Action*, a documentary which picked up a Bronze Plaque from the Columbus International Film and Video Festival; and earned this recognition from the esteemed Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa: "...the film documentary constitute(s) a startling amalgam of intelligence, insight, creativity and what can only be called unabashed enthusiasm.... I don't quite know how the ... film-maker pulled it off. I only know that it's an astonishing achievement."

In 2006, Bissell produced three short documentaries for CBC News: Sunday, including the popular *Grease*; and, with partner Christian Bruyere, produced and directed a one-hour documentary about child survivors of the tsunami in north-eastern Sri Lanka that was short-listed for the prestigious Deborah Fletcher Award for excellence in filmmaking on international development. In 2007 she did a guest stint as national columnist for *Vancouver Living*, where she produced and hosted a series of segments entitled *How Not To Have a Bad Hair Day*.

Bissell has a B.A. from the University of British Columbia and an M.A. in Graduate Liberal Studies from Simon Fraser University.

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**NAOMI JAYE**  
Toronto, ON

Naomi began her artistic journey with an Honours Degree in Theatre, specializing in design.

After graduating, Naomi began working as a costume designer for film and television. It was not long before her strong visual style led her to an interest in directing and to the New York Film Academy.

Naomi was then awarded a Federal Government Internship Grant that took her to Paris to shadow two television directors over the course of four months. While in Paris, Naomi spent all her free time writing her short film *A DOZEN FOR LULU*. It would become her first significant work.

*A DOZEN FOR LULU* screened at many festivals in North America, Europe and Australia and ultimately gained her admission into the Canadian Film Centre as part of the directors' lab.

Her next short film *PEEP* was made through the Alliance Atlantis Short Dramatic Film project at the Film Centre and screened to critical acclaim at many festivals across the world including the Commonwealth Film Festival, Palm Springs Short Film Festival and went on to win a medal at the Worldfest in Houston.

In the last year, Naomi has completed two short films. *GUAJIRA SOLA* for Latin Jazz singer Amanda Martinez screened on BRAVO to huge success, and at the Reel World Film Festivals as part of the Fresh Canadian Talent Program. *ARRIVALS*, funded through the Canada Council for the Arts and the National Film Board of Canada, has been very well received and won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for best experimental short film at the Rhode Island International Film Festival.

Naomi has the rare ability to find humour and humanity in every story. Her roots in visual design certainly help Naomi bring a charm and believability to her work that often focuses on the comedic side of human frailty.

Naomi is currently developing a feature documentary on Bollywood Jews and is in development on her feature script, *THE PIN* with support from the Canada Council for the Arts scriptwriting grant. It should also be noted that Naomi has a space on her mantel awaiting her first \*OSCAR\*.

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**PAULA JONES**  
Auckland, NZ

Ko Maungahaumi te Maunga  
Ko Takitimu te Waka  
Ko Waipoa te Awa  
Ko Takipu me Ohinewaiapu oku Marae  
Ko Taupara te Hapu

Ko Te Aitanga a Mahaki me Ngati Porou oku Iwi

Ko Paula Whetu Jones toku ingoa  
Ko Tuhura Jones toku Matua  
Ko ElizabethAnn Rogers toku Whaea

My name is Paula Jones and at the moment life's great! I have my 21 year daughter who has just moved home with her boyfriend Kahu, my 17 year old son, my 10 year old daughter, my Mum, my 12 year old nephew, Tuhoe and our new adopted family member Mohammed all living together in Auckland where I work as a documentary Director. At the moment I am working on a series called Tatai Hono which is about reconnecting families and also working on a documentary series called Once Bitten, about 2<sup>nd</sup> time around relationships, the trials and tribulations of two families coming together. ...Never a dull moment!! Perhaps its life imitating art!!!

I grew up with my Mum and 5 siblings in Hastings New Zealand. I left school at 15 because I knew everything I needed to know about life...then I got pregnant...and thought "how did that happen?" and realized, maybe I didn't!! I had my baby (Jazz) and worked in a number of minimum wage jobs, all the while thinking about my future job prospects, which were dwindling by the second. I had mastered the extremely mentally stimulating art of putting the pears on the peeling machine at break neck speed and counting 3 cherries, and ONLY 3 cherries into the tins of fruit salad!! I had reached the top of my game in the factory...where else could I go!!

....."Insert tumultuous 7 years here".....

Two kids later I'm at film school, I had found my calling...no one was listening ...but I had found my calling. I have now been in the industry for 12 years starting as less than a production assistant, I actually held the doors for the production assistants and now I'm holding the doors for the producers, oh how things have changed!! My forte at the moment is documentary directing, social issues, you name it; I've made a doco about it! I feel I have a unique way of telling the stories, probably because of my first hand experience of all the topics I choose to document! I have always written, using writing as a outlet for my frustrations and eventually

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**DOMINIQUE KELLER**  
Calgary, AB

Exposed to travel and culture from a young age, Dominique earned a BSc. in Anthropology from the University of Calgary. Driven to combine her cultural awareness with a passion for filmmaking, she went onto study film at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Dominique's first documentary--*Kilimanjaro the Journey*, found her training two women to mountain climb and then following them, camera in tow, all the way to the top of Africa's tallest peak. Driven to collaborate with international television and filmmakers, she then moved to Paris, France to work with *Pilot Productions* U.K to produce episodes of the *Globe-trekker* (formally *Lonely Planet*) travel show.

Returning to Canada in 2004, Dominique created the dance film, *CEA*. *CEA* was selected as a top ten Alberta short, was nominated for three Alberta Motion Picture Association awards and played on CBC television as well in several film festivals around the world. Dominique recently produced and directed a Co-production with the National Film Board of Canada, The Banff Centre and Bravo television titled *Aboriginality*. *Aboriginality* is a dance film that incorporates spoken word, traditional music and animation. *Aboriginality* was nominated for awards at the 2007 Calgary International Film Festival and the 2007 Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival and earned Dominique a Best Alberta Director nomination. *Aboriginality* also screened at the 2007 Tokyo international Film Festival, the American Indian International Film Festival as well as at many other major festivals around the world and aired on APTN and Bravo. Currently, Dominique has returned to her documentary roots to work with CBC's Priya Ramu to make *Brothel Justice*, a film for VSO Canada about life in a southern Bangladeshi brothel.

Dominique is a recipient of the 2005 CTV Banff Television Festival Fellowship, the 2006 Alberta Motion Picture Industries Fellowship and awards from the Alberta Foundation For The Arts, Calgary Arts Development and the Canada Council.

Dominique's creative approach to both dramatic and documentary filmmaking combines personal stories with unusual settings to create visually and emotionally powerful films. When she is not working on her own films, Dominique freelancers as a producer and director.

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**PAULA KELLY**  
Winnipeg, MB

Paula Kelly is an award-winning writer/director/producer. Recent projects include the feature-length arts documentary entitled *Appassionata: The Extraordinary Life and Music of Sonia Eckhardt-Gramatté*, commissioned for CBC's "Opening Night" and co-produced with Liz Jarvis of Buffalo Gal Pictures. *Appassionata* premiered at the Montreal International Festival of Films on Art and screened at the Rome Music DOCFEST section of the Festival di Palazzo Venezia. The film was also awarded a Gold Chris statue at the 2006 Columbus Film & Video Festival, as well the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Gimli Film Festival. Paula also picked up four awards--a Cine Gold Eagle Award, a Silver Summit Award and two Telly Awards--for writing and directing *Forever Changed*, a commercial video project for the Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

Other projects include *The Notorious Mrs. Armstrong*, a television documentary which won three Blizzard Awards for best writing, directing and editing, a Gemini Nomination for best editing, and a Bronze Plaque from the Columbus Film & Video Festival. She has also recently written and directed three episodes for the acclaimed "Sharing Circle" documentary series (CITY-TV and APTN). Paula was recently selected as Artist-In-Residence for the City of Winnipeg's Public Art Program and just released the resulting project entitled *Souvenirs*, a trio of short films which explore the shaping of the city's identity over the past 100 years. In 2007, she was awarded a grant from the Manitoba Arts Council to write a script for a science fiction short drama with the working title *Devil's Lake*.

Previous dramatic experience includes the youth science fiction series "2030CE" (director), as well as several independent short dramas which have received several Blizzard award nominations, and been showcased at festivals around the world. Her half-hour drama *Epiphany Rules* was the opening premiere of the Local Heroes Film Festival, and selected for the Los Angeles International Short Film Festival, and the Festival Internacional de Cinema de Figueira da Foz, as well as obtaining distribution through Omni Distribution in L.A.

Paula Kelly was also writer and co-producer on *Dames*, a short film noir drama recently described as a "Favorite at festivals around the world for around ten years" by Cineffable : Festival International du film lesbien et féministe de Paris. Her feature film script, *The Emancipation of Emily Blake*, was selected in competition for the 2006 Whistler Film Festival Feature Film Workshop and Film Training Manitoba's "Screenwriter Showcase." In early 2008, she received support from the Writers First program at Telefilm Canada for the development of a feature film script called *Euphoria*.

As a producer, Paula Kelly was selected in 2006 for Strategic Partners Market (Halifax), as well as *Cinebridge*, the recent U.K. producers' mission to explore co-production opportunities. This initiative was sponsored through Western Economic Diversification Canada, Canadian Heritage's Trade Routes Initiative, Industry Canada, Telefilm Canada, Manitoba Trade, and Manitoba Film & Sound. She is a CTV Banff Fellow and a MIPCOM Fellow, and is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre. She graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Arts Double Honours degree in English and History.

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**KAREN LAM**  
Vancouver, BC

Karen has worked in the Canadian film and television industry since 1996. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Brandon University in Manitoba. In 1991, she graduated with an Honours Degree in English literature (Silver Medal), with a double minor in History and Religion.

Karen obtained her law degree from the University of British Columbia. After completing her articles and being called to the Bar of British Columbia, she worked at British Columbia Film as in-house legal counsel, program administrator, and revenue collector. In 1998-9, she assisted in drafting tax credit legislation in British Columbia and administered the tax credit program on behalf of the provincial government.

In 1999, Karen joined PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in their entertainment and media group as a film and television industry advisor. She worked as a legal and business advisor on such varied productions as the feature documentary "The Corporation" (2003), and the feature film "The Burial Society" (2002).

In the fall of 2000, Karen became a full-time producer. She has since received producer credits on two feature films, four short films, and three television series. Highlights include: "The Bone Snatcher" (2003) was the first Canada/South Africa/UK feature film certified under the South Africa/Canada treaty. It is being distributed by First Look/Alliance and has fully recouped its \$3.5 million production budget. She produced the fourth season of "The Creative Native" (2005) which received the Leo Award for Best Information Series. She produced the short film "Head Shot" for Dennis Heaton (2006), which premiered in competition at the Berlinale Film Festival, and has won numerous awards at over forty festivals to date.

In late 2005, Karen's first short film script ("The Cabinet") was selected for the National Screen Institute – Drama Prize. The film was completed in 2007 and has been programmed and short-listed for awards in twelve film festivals to date.

Since the completion of the short film, she has turned her hand to writing feature film scripts. "Covet", which is loosely based on the short film, and has since received development financing from Telefilm, and distribution interest from Seville Pictures. "Plagued" is a teen horror film, was commissioned and written for Rachel Talalay ("Nightmare on Elm Street", "Tank Girl.") "Blood and Bone," her latest script, is a horror film from the perspective of a cannibal family whose way of life is being threatened by ruthless land developers. All of her feature film scripts are Gothic, female-driven horror/suspense films, with a strong emphasis on the macabre.

Karen also wrote and created a comedic television series pilot and series bible called "Bruised Fruit" which was one of seven television projects selected for development in the National Screen Institute's *Totally Television*. The series centers on the antics of an aging grunge rock band, and their refusal to mature. It is currently under consideration by Canwest Global and The comedy Network.

Her feature film script ("Stained") has recently received development assistance from Telefilm. She is currently raising financing for the project, and hopes to direct as her first feature film in the winter of 2009.

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**SHARON LEWIS**  
Toronto, ON

Sharon was pursuing graduate studies in Political Science when she landed a part-time job at a theatre company called Second Look Community Arts. Although Sharon was hired as an administrator her natural talent in the arts led her to full-time employment as a writer, producer and director within the first year; by the end of 1990 Sharon was co-artistic director of the company. This was quite a feat for someone who had no formal training in the arts. Sharon continued to run Second Look Community Arts until the end of 1992. During her time, running Second Look, she directed, wrote and taught drama to youth. Sharon was sent to London England for training and was bitten by the acting bug. On her return to Canada she resigned from Second Look and decided to pursue acting full-time.

By 1993, Sharon was shocked at the paucity of roles for women of colour and co-founded **Sugar'n'Spice**, a production company that promoted work by and for women of colour. She co-wrote the Dora nominated play **sistahs** which has since been published by Playwrights Union of Canada.

During 1993 and 1994, Sharon continued to appear in theatre and television, and received the prestigious screenplay scholarship from the National Film Board of Canada and another scholarship from the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) to adapt the play **sistahs** into a screenplay. And hence Sharon's screenwriting talents were added to her playwright talents.

In 1994, Sharon landed the lead role in Clement Virgo's film **Rude**. She played the title character of Rude and attended the **Cannes Film Festival** in 1995 to represent the film. It was a landmark film in that it was the first film written, directed and produced by Black Canadians. It was a project that auditioned in the United States and Canada, and was a project that Sharon was understandably proud to play a lead role in.

Sharon has been published in both the non-fiction and fiction field. The landmark anthology that has half of its submissions from women of color, **Plural Desires**, which explores women's bisexuality, was published in 1994, by sistervision press. Sharon co-edited the anthology and contributed a piece called the "good-bi girl". a collection of her short stories from her novel, called "poverty and love" has been published in an anthology called **Mercury Retrograde** sistervision press, 1999. In 2000, Sharon landed the coveted prime time spot on CBC's Newsworld as the host of a national political debating show, **counterSpin**. She steered that show to it's highest ratings and through the tumultuous time of 9/11. Sharon decided to move in another direction closer to her artistic roots and left that show to host the CBC multiplatform interactive television show, **ZeD**. She was nominated for a Gemini and a Leo award for Best Host in a Series.

Sharon continues to work behind the camera, directing short films, television and is in development with her first feature.

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**SHELLEY TEPPERMAN**  
Montreal, QC

Shelley Tepperman is a writer, director and story editor who works in both drama and documentary film and television—in several languages. Permeating all of her work is a passion for helping audiences discover and journey into new cultures. She is a respected play translator and adaptor whose 30 translations have been produced at CBC radio and on stages across North America as well as in the UK and Dublin.

After earning a B.A. at the University of Toronto (1983) Shelley began her career at Toronto's (now defunct) Theatre Plus. She worked closely with the Artistic Director, taking on literary management duties, assistant directing, focussing on new play development and seeking important new work from Quebec and Latin America. In 1988, two grants funded a year of professional development in Montreal and Europe, where she was able to explore different styles of play development and discover new work in Quebec, France, Spain and Italy.

In early 1989 she returned to Montreal to do an M.A. in Drama at the University of Quebec in Montreal, and a diploma in Translation at McGill, all the while remaining professionally active with Street People Theatre and Playwrights Workshop Montreal. She curated events showcasing playwrights of her generation and then started translating their plays, earning Governor-General's Award nominations for her first two published translations. From 1994 to 1998 she worked for CBC Radio Arts and Entertainment. Beginning as the script editor for the weekly drama series *Studio 94*, she worked closely with writers to develop new radio dramas alongside Series Producer Bill Lane. Eventually she herself wrote and adapting some dramas herself, teaching radio drama workshops, workshops and ultimately, producing and directing several pieces for national broadcast.

Although she maintains her connection to the theatre, since 2000 Shelley has earned her living writing, story editing and directing for documentary television. She seems to write and story edit in English, and direct more in French (although she writes in French for her own films in that language.)

Among her credits are the youth series *Popular Mechanics for Kids*, *To the Max!*, *Je vis ta vie* three seasons of the internationally syndicated *Dogs with Jobs*, as and the Discovery series *Doctor\*ology*. Her film *Legacy in a Jar*, about food, culture and identity (and shot partly in Italian), has a cult following among foodies and Italophiles and continued to air occasionally on OmniTV. Shelley's recent film, *Les Juifs de Québec : Une histoire à raconter*, made for Quebec's Canal D, blends fiction and documentary to tell the unknown story of the Jews of Quebec City. Among her future projects is a bilingual dramedy that she would love to develop and bring to the big or small screen.